



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Washington DC 20420

MAR 07 2019

Via Email: 51966952@requests.muckrock.com

Mr. Jasper Craven
MuckRock News
Dept. MR 52378
411A Highland Avenue
Somerville, MA 02144-2516

Dear Mr. Craven:

This letter is to acknowledge receipt of your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) dated April 12, 2018, in which you are requesting:

"Any contracts, memos, reports or e-mails stating the need for and purchase of shooting targets, ammunition, and other defense gear by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs Police between January 2001 and present day."

Your request was received in this office on April 13, 2018, and assigned FOIA tracking number **19-04875-F**.

We regret the delay you have experienced in receiving a VA response to your FOIA request. The delay is due to a shortage of FOIA staff coupled with a significant FOIA backlog, and the requirements of 38 C.F.R. 1.555 (c) to consult with the component that originated or has a substantial interest in the records involved prior to any disclosure.

Before the VA can process your request, we need additional clarification and more specificity of "other defense gear." According to our regulations, a request for records "must contain a reasonable description of the records desired so that it may be located with relative ease." Per 38 CFR, 1.554(d), the requester's description of the records sought needs to describe such records in enough detail to allow VA FOIA Officers to locate them with a "reasonable amount of effort." To the extent possible, the requester should include specific information about each record sought, such as the date, title or name, author, recipient and subject matter. Wide ranging requests that lack specificity or contain descriptions of very general subject matters with no description of specific records may be considered "not reasonably described."

To ensure that VA conducts a thorough and efficient records search, please provide the requested information.

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Please know that we contacted several VA offices such as the Office of Security and Preparedness (OSP) VA Central Office and was informed that the records in question are not maintained in OSP Central Office, nor does OSP handle purchases or acquisitions for field police services. We also contacted the Veterans Health Administration Central Office (VHACO) and was informed that VHACO does not maintain the records being requested, and, each VA Medical Facility with a VA Police Department handles its own orders. Per VHA Directive 1935, VISN FOIA Officers will process the request when the request seeks the same records from three or more facilities within the respective VISN.

Once the VA receives your clarification, your request will have to be referred to the VA's Law Enforcement Training Center, and, to the Veterans Health Administration VISN offices (approximately 18 offices).

Please contact us within 30 calendar days of the date of this communication or we will conclude that you are no longer interested in pursuing this request and will close our files. Your request is being "tolled" until we receive your response to our request for clarification.

We appreciate your interest in the VA. If you have any further questions concerning this letter, do not hesitate in contacting Ms. Diane Cooke of my staff at (202) 632-7419.

Sincerely,



for James H. Johnson
Ms. Doloras Johnson
Director, VACO FOIA Service
Quality, Performance, and Risk (QPR)
Office of Information and Technology (OIT)